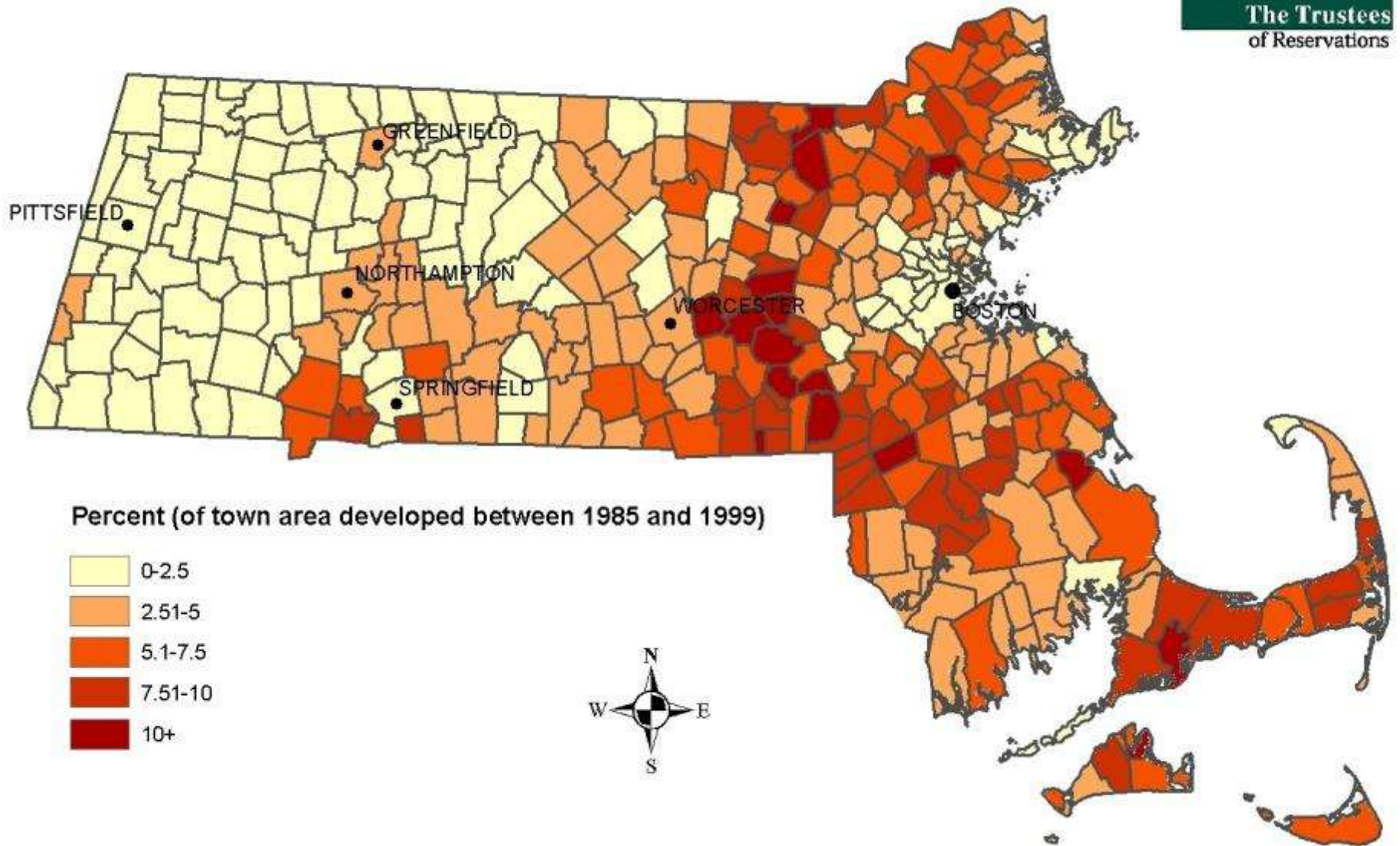




Permanently Protecting Trails: An Introduction to Trail Easements

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Massachusetts - Development Pressures



Land Trusts

- Non profit, mission-driven organizations that conserve and steward land forever.
- Seem very similar at first, but can vary greatly in focus and land management
- Often work in partnership



Why Protect Trail Corridors?

- The Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts – \$100,000
- Established in 1969
- 30 clubs
- Represent 16,500 snowmobilers in Massachusetts
- Grassroots volunteer organization
- Self-funded through membership dues
- Family recreation: Average age is 43, 68% are married with children
- Contribute more than \$65 million dollars annually to the state's economy



Trails

- 1,659 miles of groomed trail
- 500 miles of ungroomed trail
- Fleet of over 100 groomers
- Maintained by volunteers
- Trails stretch from Worcester County to NY border.
- 65% of SAM trails are on private property



Contiguous Trails are a Priority

- Snowmobilers are tourists
- They ride to destinations
- 1,141 miles ridden per season
- The Interconnected Trail System - ITS
- Trails in Massachusetts connect directly to New Hampshire, Vermont and New York.
- Travel to Maine, Canada, and points west.

Contiguous Trails are a Priority

- Safer
- Protect sensitive environmental areas
- Avoid trespass
- Ease enforcement
- Support economy



Trail Protection

- Traditional Landowners
- Development
- Tools



Trail Protection Methods

- Handshake agreement
- License or Agreement
- Trail Easement
- Conservation Easement
- Ownership of land and trail

Level of
Protection

Weak

STRONG



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Conservation Restriction (CR)

- Shorthand: ('development rights')
- Landowner still owns land, permanently eliminates some rights (new development, roads, strip mining)
- Each CR is tailored to individual property
- Land can be sold or passed on, but all future landowners are subject to the restriction
- Land Trust receives legal right to monitor and enforce

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Trail Easements Or Rights of Way

A legal agreement that allows others to use someone's land for a specific use. Can be for access to an entire property or just a trail of a certain width. Uses and conditions are negotiated by the landowner and the group being granted access.







Trail Easement

- Permanent, binding on future owners

- Can be held by a snowmobile club, municipality, organization or land trust

- Clarifies conditions of use and maintenance



Trail Easements

- Legal costs
- May not be appealing to landowners
- No guarantee that the land surrounding the trail won't get developed

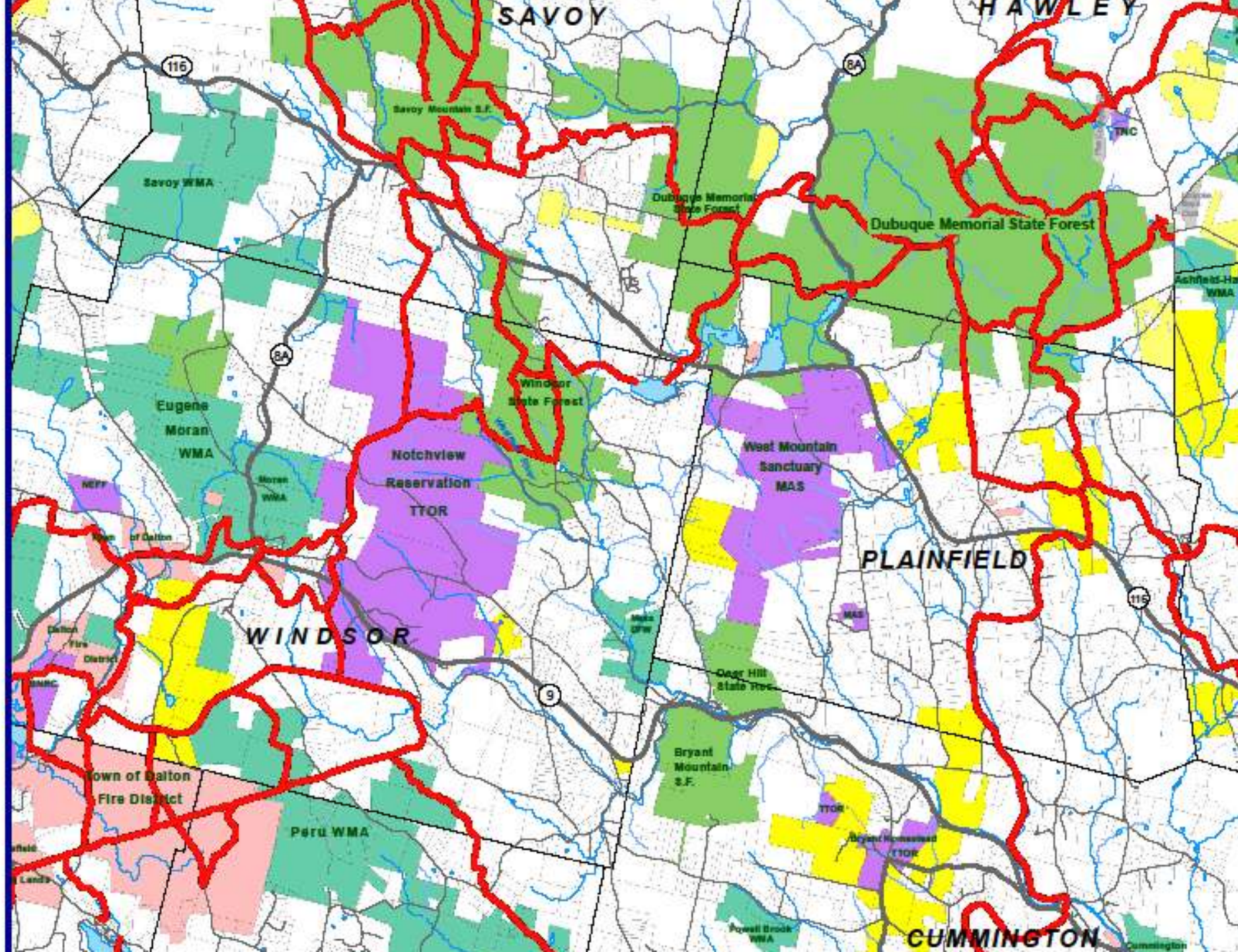
Key Provisions of a Trail Easement

- Width, location of trail
- Duties and Rights of Landowner
- Duties and Rights of Grantee (Snowmobile Club)
- Liability
- Enforcement
- Permanence



Reaching Out to Landowners

- Be opportunistic AND strategic
- Use your network— your clubmembers
- Find the right spokesperson
- Consider partnering with other groups, committees, or land trusts
- Present permanent trail protection as an option that landowners might not have known about or considered before
- Be patient. Big decisions with permanent consequences can take a long time. You've planted the seeds.



Spencer Trail Protection Project

- The Sibley and Warner Farms
- History of the Trail
- Dealing with a Developer
- Working with a Land Trust

